

## INLETS

Three inlets have been identified within the project area. A description for each of the following is given below.

### Corncake Inlet

### Gold Leaf Inlet

### New Inlet

#### **Corncake Inlet**

An entrance from the Atlantic Ocean into the Cape Fear River at Buzzard Bay just north of Smith Island was known as Corncake Inlet during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Corncake Inlet and nearby Gold Leaf Inlet both appear to have been formed prior to 1887, when they first are indicated on maps by name. By 1883 the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers had already contracted individuals for supplying stone, brush, and other material for closing Corncake Inlet. The inlet appears on several U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey maps drawn after 1887, with the last known one drawn in 1959. Corncake Inlet was reported to be nearly closed by 1933, when its width was only 75 yards. A depth of just 2 feet of water covered the bar. By 1944 the Corncake Inlet name was applied to the "Goldleaf" entrance (Powell 1968:120; Wilmington Star, October 4, 1883; Wilmington News, March 17, 1933; USCGS 1887; USCGS 1959).

#### **Gold Leaf Inlet (New Inlet II)**

Gold Leaf Inlet first appears as a break through the narrow sand barrier between the Cape Fear River and the ocean on a U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey map drawn in 1887. The inlet remains identified on maps until the early twentieth century. By 1944 the Gold Leaf name had been discontinued and replaced with Corncake Inlet. At that time a channel connected the inlet with Buzzard Bay. Since the 1960s the inlet has been referred to as New Inlet—not to be confused with the original New Inlet that opened in 1761 just below Federal Point (USCGS 1887; USCGS 1888; USCGS 1901b; Anonymous 1964; USGS 1979a; NOAA 1992).

#### **New Inlet**

New Inlet was formed by a major storm in 1761 immediately below Federal Point. The inlet created a new entrance to the Cape Fear River and significantly changed the main channel at the river's mouth. "Baldhead" channel had been the natural and main entrance to the river, but as a result of the formation of New Inlet the depth of water upon the main bar diminished from 15 feet in 1797 to 9 feet in 1839. A new entrance called the Rip or Western Channel was formed; and from 1839 to 1872 both the Rip and New Inlet were the main entrances, and the use of Baldhead was discontinued. During the Civil War, New Inlet was used extensively by blockade-runners to bring goods into Wilmington. Construction was begun on a major seawall, known as The Rocks, by the Corps of Engineers in 1870 to close off New Inlet and change the navigation channel back to its former entrance at the mouth of the Cape Fear River. When completed in 1891, the defensive dam permanently closed New Inlet to